

William Spyropoulos Saint Nicholas Greek-American School: Nurturing Hellenic Heritage



Dr. Anastasios Koularmanis, Director of the Department of Greek Education, will be releasing a series of articles that center on Greek Education, with a particular emphasis on spotlighting several Day-Schools.

In 1955, the vision of Dr. Anthony Vasilas and Pete Vasilas gave rise to the creation of a vibrant Greek-American community in Flushing, New York. With resounding enthusiasm, over 450 Greek individuals rallied together within ten weeks to lay the foundation for a church that would become a haven for faith and culture. The church, aptly named Three Hierarchs, officially opened its doors on September 18, 1955, under the guidance of Fr. Constantine Volaitis, marking the birth of a dynamic community.

As the years unfolded, the congregation swelled from 200 to over 1000 families, catalyzing the acquisition of land at 196th Street in May 1964. Archbishop Iakovos consecrated the new church's cornerstone on October 11, 1964, ushering in a new chapter in the community's journey.

With an unwavering commitment to nurturing the education of Greek-American youth, the Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Community of Flushing embarked on the journey of establishing an elementary school, a day school, and an afternoon

school. These institutions were designed to provide a holistic learning experience that intertwined language, heritage, and faith.

The Stephen and Areti Cherpelis Greek Afternoon School was an early embodiment of this commitment, offering a robust curriculum that encompassed Greek language classes for various age groups, Greek as a Second Language courses, and comprehensive lessons in Greek history, religion, and culture. The school's holistic approach also extended to extracurricular activities like Greek dance and theater classes, cultivating a deep connection to the Greek cultural tapestry.

In September 1977, the Saint Nicholas Church added another chapter to its educational legacy with the establishment of the William Spyropoulos Greek American Day School, named in honor of philanthropist William Spyropoulos. This parochial school, catering to Grades K-8, embraced a holistic pedagogical approach, combining the New York State Core Curriculum, an intensive Greek Language and Heritage Program, and rigorous religious instruction.

A hallmark of the William Spyropoulos Day School was its emphasis on academic excellence. The institution offered small class sizes with leveled instruction, advanced Regents courses, and even Spanish language education. Beyond the classroom, the school enriched students' experiences with computer and science labs, engaging student publications, fairs, trips, assemblies, and after-school activities, setting the stage for successful transitions to competitive high schools.

The Saint Nicholas George & Evlavia Doulaveris Preschool, established in 2002, marked a new chapter of early childhood education within the Saint Nicholas community. This preschool provided a nurturing environment for children aged two years and nine months through five years and six months, delivering certified teaching alongside well-trained assistants.

In retrospect, though distinct entities, these schools collectively represented the unwavering dedication of the Saint Nicholas Church in preserving and perpetuating Hellenic heritage. The William Spyropoulos Greek-American Day School, with its multifaceted approach, nurtured generations of Greek-American youth, fostering a deep connection to language, faith, culture, and community. In this interwoven narrative of faith and education, the Saint Nicholas community of Flushing exemplified the enduring spirit of Hellenism, contributing to the vibrant mosaic of New York City.

Photos: William Spyropoulos Saint Nicholas Greek-American School

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